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The Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D. C. 20505

82-451211

10 MAR 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Administrator of General Services

SUBJECT: Purchase of Typewriters from the German
Democratic Republic

1. It has recently come to my attention that a contract is under consideration by GSA for the purchase of manual typewriters from an East German supplier. Such a contract has national security implications of which I believe you should be aware.

2. Since the typewriters are to be used throughout the Government, it is likely that some will be used for typing classified or sensitive information. It is possible that modifications to the typewriters made during or subsequent to manufacture could provide the ability to reconstruct, from a separate location, what is being typed. This possibility is not unique to the East German typewriter, but modification is much easier where control is exercised over the manufacture of the typewriter or of repair parts.

3. We do not know that the East Germans have plans to exploit the typewriters for intelligence collection purposes; however, the East German government is known both to routinely engage in clandestine intelligence operations against the United States and to share the results of these operations with the Soviet Union. Thus, while the specific intent of the East Germans in regard to the typewriters is uncertain, no such uncertainty exists in regard to their overall hostile intent toward the United States.

4. To put the matter in perspective, it must be stated that the purchase of typewriters from East Germany does not create a new, unique intelligence threat. Rather, an existing threat is enhanced by the involvement of an undeniably hostile country. If we must buy from a foreign manufacturer, it would be much less disturbing to buy from a friendly or, at least, a neutral country.

5. I understand that GSA's contract decisions must take into consideration a variety of factors and that other issues may override the fairly limited intelligence concerns in this case. However, I hope that the foregoing discussion will allow you to weigh national security considerations along with any other issues involved.

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6. Should your staff require further information, please have them
contact [redacted] of the Intelligence Community Staff at [redacted]

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/s/ B. R. Inman

B. R. INMAN
Admiral, U.S. Navy

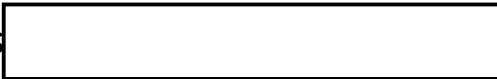
cc:

Charles A. Bowsher
Comptroller General, GAO

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(9 March 1982)

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